The Family

BETWEEN THE DAYS.

Between the days, the weary days,
He drops the darkness and the dew;
Over tired eyes his hands he lays,
And strength and hope, and life renews.
Thank God for rest between the days!

Else who could bear the battle stress
Or who withstand the tempest's shock,
Who tread the dreary wilderness
Among the pitfalls and the rocks,
Came not the night with folded flocks?

The white light scorches and the plain
Stretches before us, parched with the heat;
But, by and by, the fierce beams wane;
And lo! the nightfall, cool and sweet,
With dews to bathe our aching feet!

For He remembereth our frame!
Even for this I render praise,
O, tender Master, slow to blame
The falterer on life's stormy ways,
Abide with us—between the days!

—The British Weekly.

THE BLUE PITCHER.

By Harriet Lummis Smith.

When Hulda unpacked her trunk, after her visit to the city, her mother looked surprised. "I declare, Hulda," she said, "If I'd been going to buy dishes, I'd have bought something new and up-to-date. Why—my mother had a pitcher that was the image of that."

"Yes, I know," nodded Hulda, "I bought it because it made me think of grandma's pitcher. I was a little bit of a girl when it got broken. One of the cats was stealing cream." She placed the pitcher on the mahogany sideboard and drew back to survey her purchase. "I think it looks real nice," she exclaimed.

"It does so," Mrs. Wylie acknowledged. "They seem to belong together, as you might say. I suppose that's because they're both old. At least the sideboard is, and the pitcher looks that way."

"It only cost twenty-nine cents," said Hulda. "Aunt Ernestine took me to a place where there were thousands of them, I guess. They were marked down from forty cents," she added proudly. "So it was quite a bargain."

The blue pitcher was an old story in the household when the summer came, and with it Miss Pendleton. Most of the farm houses in the vicinity had at least one boarder during summer months, and Mrs. Wylie's big, airy front room, the wide porch which extended around the three sides of the house, and the stately maples bordering the drive, all possessed an undeniable fascination for city people. Miss Pendleton was delighted with them all. But it took the blue pitcher to kindle her enthusiasm.

When Hulda carried up a pitcher of cold water the first evening of her stay Miss Pendleton uttered an exclamation and dropped her magazine.

"Why, you dear careless girl," she cried. "To think of using that lovely old-fashioned pitcher for every day. Suppose I should break it, what would you think then?" She took the pitcher up, turning it from side to side, and did not seem to mind when she splashed a little spring water over her pretty gown. "I suppose your mother prizes this very highly," she observed.

"It belongs to me," said Hulda. It was on the tip of her tongue to add that she had bought it in the very city that was Miss Pendleton's home, and had paid twenty-nine cents for it. But Hulda was rather shy with strangers and so the moment passed for making her confidence.

"Beautiful, beautiful," murmured Miss Pendleton, seeming to forget Hulda for a moment. Then she looked up, adjusting her glasses. "Has your mother much old-fashioned china?"

"She used to have," replied Hulda, "but we don't have any now. There were a good many children, you see, before the others grew up and went away, and there were lots of cats and dogs, too, so that dishes were always getting broken."

Miss Pendleton sighed, as if it were very bad news indeed. "But the pitcher is left," she said, "and you are its fortunate owner." She poured a glass of water and sipped it with relish, as if the blue pitcher had imparted to it a delicate flavor.

Just how it came about Hulda hardly knew. She certainly had no idea of trying to deceive Miss Pendleton in the beginning, and yet as the days went by, she found that she was giving countenance to the city lady's assumption that the blue pitcher was a family heirloom. It did not take long to discover that Miss Pendleton considered herself an authority on such matters, and Hulda realized that an explanation would be embarrassing to them both. If she had taken her mother into her confidence, Mrs. Wylie's sturdy good sense would undoubtedly have been equal to the emergency, but Hulda did not see the possibility of making a third person understand how simply it all had come about. At any moment, she realized the truth might come out. If Miss Pendleton should mention the blue pitcher to Mrs. Wylie, explanations were sure to follow. Hulda's mother found it hard to understand the girl's nervousness that summer, and her brusque, almost unmannerly way of changing the subject of a conversation.

Hulda herself wished, with all her heart, that her twenty-nine cents were back in her pocket and the blue pitcher in the department store where she saw it first. She wished that the pitcher had been broken before Miss Pendleton's arrival. She reached at last an equally useless wish that she had been frank at the start. Ten words that first evening would have saved the necessity for all these disquieting thoughts. Hulda was sure she should know better another time.

One evening as she carried Miss Pendleton the pitcher of water, she found the lights turned low in the room and the moonlight flooding it. Miss Pendleton sat by the window and she called Hulda to look out on the silvery, serene night. "The breeze is quite cool, isn't it?" said Miss Pendleton. "If I am to sit here long, I believe I shall need a wrap."

She moved away, and a moment later Hulda heard a crash and a cry. She turned quickly. The blue pitcher was in fragments on the floor, and Miss Pendleton was gazing at them, horror-stricken.

Before Hulda could find her voice to say that it did not matter, Miss Pendleton had spoken. "O, Hulda, you are to blame," she cried: "you set it too near the edge of the table.'

"Yes, it was my fault," Hulda agreed readily. "Don't mind, Miss Pendleton."

"O, but I do mind," Miss Pendleton exclaimed despairingly. "What will your mother say?"

Hulda knew only too well what her mother would say. She could almost hear Mrs. Wylie's cheerful voice exclaiming, "Why don't give yourself another thought about it, Miss Pendleton, it only cost twenty-nine cents. Hulda bought it when she visited her aunt in the city." That would not do Hulda sighed, and took another step in the wrong direction.

"I guess maybe we'd better not tell mamma," she said. "You know the pitcher is mine. And I'll hide the pieces away somewhere."

"But certainly she will miss it immediately."

"I don't believe she will," replied Hulda, "and if she does I'll say I broke it." Her respect for Miss Pendleton was not heigthened by the evident relief this suggestion brought, and when the lady crossed the room and kissed her, she felt an odd impulse to shrink away.

Now that the perplexity of the blue pitcher was removed, the summer went on uneventfully. One day, indeed, Mrs. Wylie said to her daughter. "I wonder what's become of that blue pitcher, Hulda?" And when Hulda replied. "It got broken one night when I was taking some water to Miss Pendleton," the subject was dropped. But if Hulda flattered herself that it was safe to forget the matter, she was mistaken. For deception, even when it comes about so gradually that one hardly realizes its true nature, has a way of turning up again at the most unexpected and inopportune times.

The summer came to an end. Miss Pendleton went back to the city, promising to come again another year, and though she kissed Hulda good-bye with an affection which touched the girl, Hulda could not help hoping that some one else would occupy the spacious front room the following summer. She had a miserable feeling that things would never be quite the same as they were before the affair of the blue pitcher. For the first time in her life there was a shadow between her mother and herself, the shadow of a secret. Vainly she tried to comfort herself by thinking that it was too trivial a matter.

When she came home from school one